

CAREER GUIDE FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST AIDES

SOC Code: 31-2012

Pay Band(s): 2 and 3 ([Salary Structure](#))

Standard Occupational Description: Under close supervision of an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant, perform only delegated, selected, or routine tasks in specific situations. These duties include preparing patient and treatment room.

Occupational Therapist Aides positions in the Commonwealth are assigned to the following Roles in the [Direct Service Career Group](#):

[Direct Service Associate II](#)

[Direct Service Associate III](#)

While Occupational Therapist Aides within the Commonwealth are all located within the Direct Service Career Group, individuals may want to pursue other opportunities within the Commonwealth depending upon individual training, education, knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests.

Other Career Group(s) that may be of interest are:

[Rehabilitation Therapies](#)

[Administrative and Office Support](#)

[Laboratory and Research Services](#)

SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, ABILITIES AND TASKS

(Technical and Functional Expertise)

Skills

Note: The technical and functional skills listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Occupational Therapist Aide commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the skills listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

1. Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
2. Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
3. Actively looking for ways to help people.
4. Teaching others how to do something.
5. Talking to others to convey information effectively.
6. Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
7. Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
8. Generating or adapting equipment and technology to serve user needs.
9. Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
10. Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.

Knowledge

Note: The technical and functional knowledge statements listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Occupational Therapist Aide commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the knowledge listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Knowledge** of:

1. Principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
2. Principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
3. Information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
4. Principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
5. Human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
6. Structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

Abilities

Note: The technical and functional abilities listed below are based on general occupational qualifications for Occupational Therapist Aide commonly recognized by most employers. Typically, you will not be required to have all of the abilities listed to be a successful performer. Recruitment and selection standards for an individual state job must be based on the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities for that job as indicated in the job announcement and job description in the Employee Work Profile.

The **Ability** to:

1. Tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
2. Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
3. Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
4. Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
5. Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
6. Remember information such as words, numbers, pictures, and procedures.
7. Exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.
8. Identify and understand the speech of another person.

Tasks

Note: The following is a list of sample tasks typically performed by Occupational Therapist Aide. Employees in this occupation will not necessarily perform all of the tasks listed.

1. Accompany patients on outings, providing transportation when necessary.
2. Assist educational specialists or clinical psychologists in administering situational or diagnostic tests to measure client's abilities or progress.

3. Assist occupational therapists in planning, implementing, and administering therapy programs to restore, reinforce, and enhance performance, using selected activities and special equipment.
4. Demonstrate therapy techniques, such as manual and creative arts, and games. Encourage patients and attend to their physical needs to facilitate the attainment of therapeutic goals.
5. Evaluate the living skills and capacities of physically, developmentally, or emotionally disabled clients. Instruct patients and families in work, social, and living skills, the care and use of adaptive equipment and other skills to facilitate home and work adjustment to disability.
6. Observe patients' attendance, progress, attitudes, and accomplishments, and record and maintain information in client records.
7. Perform clerical, administrative and secretarial duties such as answering phones, restocking and ordering supplies, filling out paperwork and scheduling appointments.
8. Prepare and maintain work area, materials, and equipment, and maintain inventory of treatment and educational supplies

INTERESTED?

Like people, occupations have traits or characteristics. These characteristics give important clues about the nature of the work and work environment, and give you an opportunity to match your own personal interests to a specific occupation. When you choose a job in an occupation that matches your own interests you have taken an important step in planning a successful and rewarding career.

Occupations as Occupational Therapy Aides are considered **Social** occupations and frequently involve working with, communicating with, and teaching people. These occupations often involve helping or providing service to others.

These occupations are **Realistic** occupations and frequently involve work activities that include practical, hands-on problems and solutions. They often deal with plants, animals, and real-world materials like wood, tools, and machinery. Many of the occupations require working outside, and do not involve a lot of paperwork or working closely with others.

LICENSURE, REGISTRATION, OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Generally licensure is not required for Occupational Therapist Aide positions in state government. However for career progression in the field of occupational therapy as an assistant or therapist then a license or certification is required. Licensing information for Occupational Therapist can be found on the Department of Health Profession's web site at <http://www.dhp.state.virginia.us/>

EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING, AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics provides the following information:

Occupational therapist assistants and aides work under the direction of occupational therapists to provide rehabilitative services to persons with mental, physical, emotional, or developmental impairments. The ultimate goal is to improve clients' quality of life and ability to perform daily activities. For example, occupational therapist assistants help injured workers re-enter the labor

force by teaching them how to compensate for lost motor skills or help individuals with learning disabilities increase their independence.

Occupational therapist aides typically prepare materials and assemble equipment used during treatment. They are responsible for a range of clerical tasks, including scheduling appointments, answering the telephone, restocking or ordering depleted supplies, and filling out insurance forms or other paperwork. Aides are not licensed, so the law does not allow them to perform as wide a range of tasks as occupational therapist assistants.

Occupational therapist assistants and aides need to have a moderate degree of strength, due to the physical exertion required in assisting patients with their treatment. For example, assistants and aides may need to lift patients. Constant kneeling, stooping, and standing for long periods also are part of the job.

Occupational therapist aides usually receive most of their training on the job. Qualified applicants must have a high school diploma, strong interpersonal skills, and a desire to help people in need. Applicants may increase their chances of getting a job by volunteering their services, thus displaying initiative and aptitude to the employer.

Assistants and aides must be responsible, patient, and willing to take directions and work as part of a team. Furthermore, they should be caring and want to help people who are not able to help themselves.

The Virginia Area Health Education Centers Program <http://www.ahec.vcu.edu/vhc/ther.pdf> lists the Virginia Educational Institutions that offer educational programs for those individuals interested in a career as an occupational therapist aide.

COMMONWEALTH COMPETENCIES

Competencies are a set of identified behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and the organization. Competencies can be observed and measured. When consistently demonstrated, competencies make employees particularly effective in their work. Competencies help lay out a road map to career success. You can use the Commonwealth Competencies to help improve your individual performance by adopting behaviors that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, you can use the Commonwealth Competencies for your further professional development.

The Commonwealth Competencies are:

1. Technical and Functional Expertise
2. Understanding the Business
3. Achieving Results
4. Serving the Customer
5. Teamwork
6. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
7. Leadership and Personal Effectiveness

The above competencies may be applied to employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. They can be rank-ordered by agencies and hiring managers to represent the needs of

a specific job. The rank ordering will change depending upon the occupation, an organization's priorities, the actual job requirements, and the supervisor's preferences.

Career success is both about what you do (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how you do it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use) while interacting and communicating with others. Hopefully, by studying the Commonwealth competencies, identifying your developmental opportunities, and working to refine your own competence, you can take charge of your career!

For additional information about the **Commonwealth Competencies** go to: http://jobs.state.va.us/cc_planningctr.htm. For the competencies, we first list the competencies and then define each. Finally, we list competency indicators; to describe what successful performance looks like.

COMMONWEALTH CAREER PATH

Career opportunities in the Commonwealth are not limited to moving “up” to the next highest role and pay band, changing positions, or to becoming a supervisor. That’s because most roles describe a broad group of occupationally related positions that perform a range of work that requires increased knowledge and skills. For that reason, Commonwealth roles describe the career paths within the same or higher-level role for the same or different Career Group. The broad salary range and the Commonwealth’s pay practices provide flexibility in recognizing career development and advancement. ([Salary Structure](#))

For example: **Occupational Therapist Aides**

PAY BAND	ROLE		
2	Direct Service Associate II		
3	Direct Service Associate III		

Sample Career Path

[Direct Service Associate II](#)

The Direct Service Associate II role provides career tracks for health care support technicians, such as physical/occupational therapist aide and others who perform health care support responsibilities ranging from entry-level to journey-level. Duties are varied, requiring either knowledge in a variety of areas or specialized knowledge to perform tasks in assigned specialty areas.

[Direct Service Associate III](#)

The Direct Service Associate III role provides career tracks for health care support specialists that are either service delivery experts or supervisors. As service delivery experts, employees provide or lead specialized services that support the work of interdisciplinary treatment teams,

licensed clinical staff, and professional counselors. As supervisors, employees supervise other Direct Service Workers, develop staff schedules, evaluate staff performance, serve as members of interdisciplinary treatment teams, make minor changes in treatment and program plans, write reports, make oral presentations, and review client records for appropriate documentation.

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

O*NET (Occupational Information Network)

http://online.onetcenter.org/gen_search_page

Virginia Employment Commission

<http://www.alex.vec.state.va.us/>

Career One Stop

<http://www.careeronestop.org/>

Virginia Career Resource Network

<http://www.vacrn.net/>

Department of Health Profession's

<http://www.dhp.state.virginia.us/>

The U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

<http://www.bls.gov>

Professional Organizations

Virginia Occupational Therapy Association

<http://www.vaota.org/>

American Occupational Therapy Association

<http://www.aota.org/>